

Pursuant to Article 13, paragraph 1, item 3) of the Law on the Science Fund of the Republic of Serbia (*Official Gazette of the RS*, No. 95/18 – hereinafter referred to as the: “Law”) and Article 10, paragraph 1, item 4) of the Articles of Association of the Science Fund of the Republic of Serbia No. UO 2/19 of April 17th, 2019, which was approved by the Government in its Decision 05 No. 110-5430/2019 of May 30th, 2019 (*Official Gazette of the RS*, No. 38/2019), at its session held on February 18th, 2020, the Managing Board of the Science Fund of the Republic of Serbia passes the:

Program IDEAS – Act on Goals, Implementation Procedure and Project Financing Terms

I. INTRODUCTORY PROVISIONS

Article 1

This Act regulates the goals of the Program IDEAS (hereinafter referred to as the: “Program”) and projects within the framework of this Program (hereinafter referred to as the: “Project”), conditions for the announcement and the procedure of implementation of public calls within the framework of the Program, and, in particular, the application procedure and conditions for the submission of Project proposals (hereinafter referred to as the: “Proposal”), the procedure and the criteria for the evaluation of Proposals, the procedure for monitoring Project implementation, the procedure for evaluating Project results, terms of financing, and rights and obligations of beneficiaries of the Project funds.

Article 2

The Program goals are as follows: to finance Projects based on outstanding ideas that can have, in the future, a significant impact on the development of science and research, economy and/or society as a whole, to include outstanding researchers into scientific and research work, to strengthen professional capacities of researchers and to create new project teams (hereinafter referred to as the: “Team”).

The Program lends support to basic and applied research in all fields of science. There are no pre-defined topics for Projects within the Program. The Program enables researchers to define their own research programs, form their own Teams and collaborate with relevant laboratories, research centers and industry in the Republic of Serbia and worldwide.

The Program is of public interest to the Republic of Serbia, and it is planned and implemented pursuant to the Law and in compliance with other legal provisions regulating scientific research and innovation.

Article 3

The Program is implemented with four subprograms for the development of scientific research in the following fields of science: 1) natural sciences, 2) technical and technological sciences, 3) (bio)medical sciences, and 4) social sciences and humanities.

Article 4

Within this Program, a Team Member can be a person who fulfils the following conditions:

- s/he has been awarded a title in research or science or an equivalent title in higher education¹; and
- s/he is employed² at an accredited Serbian science and research organization (hereinafter referred to as the: “SRO”)³ throughout the duration of the Project.

The maximal number of Team Members of a single Project is 12, with the possibility to include additional 2 young researchers⁴ if the initial Team within 12 people already has at least 2 young researchers.

¹ Junior Research Assistant, Research Assistant, Research Associate, Senior Research Associate or Principal Research Fellow; or Junior Teaching Assistant, Teaching Assistant, Teaching Assistant with Ph.D., Assistant Professor, Associate Professor or Full Professor.

² Minimum 50% out of 100% employment is requested in order to be considered to be employed in the SRO.

³ A Team Member may also be employed in an innovation center founded by an accredited SRO, but the innovation center may not be the leading institution in the Project implementation.

⁴ Persons who have been awarded the title of a Junior Research Assistant, Research Assistant, Junior Teaching Assistant and Teaching Assistant.

A Team Member who is full-time employed (including teaching and research supported through institutional or other funding) cannot be engaged for more than additional 30% of the full-time working hours on projects funded by the Science Fund of the Republic of Serbia (including different programs).

A Team Member can be employed and financed by the resources of the proposed Project with up to 100% of the full-time working hours, in compliance with other engagements⁵ and with the Labor Law.

A person may act as the Principal investigator (hereinafter referred to as the: “Principal investigator”) in only one Project within different Programs of the Science Fund of the Republic of Serbia.

A person may be a member of the Project Team, or the Principal investigator and a member of the Project Team in maximum two Projects within different Programs of the Science Fund of the Republic of Serbia.

Restrictions from paragraphs 5 and 6 of this Article do not apply to the participation of the Principal investigator or the Team Member in collaboration and mobility programs, such as the Program of Collaboration of the Serbian Science with the Diaspora.

A person who is currently not employed in an SRO can be included in the proposed Project as a Team Member only if the Principal investigator and an SRO submit a signed declaration that s/he will be employed in the SRO if the Proposal is approved for financing. This includes employment of new Ph.D. students, professionals from industry transferring to research, and researchers from abroad and the Diaspora who are interested in moving or returning to the Republic of Serbia.

A single Project may have Team Members employed in different accredited SROs in the Republic of Serbia, providing that the SRO which employs the Principal investigator is designated as the leading institution in the Project implementation.

For each Team Member, a declaration of the employing SRO proving his/her current and/or future employment status must be provided during the Proposal submission, together with a valid decision of holding a title in research or science or an equivalent title in higher education issued by an official body authorized for that specific title rank.⁶

Article 5

The Principal investigator, in addition to conditions stipulated in Article 4 hereof, must meet the following conditions:

- s/he holds a Ph.D. and has been awarded a scientific title or an equivalent title in higher education⁷;
- based on references in the last five years⁸, s/he meets the minimal quantitative requirements from the Rulebook for the Procedure, Method of Evaluation and Quantitative Expression of Scientific and Research Results of Researchers⁹, listed in Annex 4 thereof, either as:
 - Type A: requirements from the “Compulsory (2)” group, with the required minimum points for that Group for the first award of the next higher research title;¹⁰ or
 - Type B: requirements from the “Compulsory (1)” group, with the maximum number of points which is the arithmetic mean of scores for the “Compulsory (1)” and “Compulsory (2)” groups concerning the required points for the first award of the next higher research title;
- if the person has already been holding the highest title in science or an equivalent title in higher education (Principal Research Fellow or Full Professor), based on references in the last

⁵ A person engaged on the Project with 100% of employment must not have any other engagement in the SRO.

⁶ Issued by the ministry in charge of science: Research Associate, Senior Research Associate and Principal Research Fellow; issued by the SRO: Junior Research Assistant and Research Assistant; or issued by an accredited University or Faculty: Junior Teaching Assistant, Teaching Assistant, Teaching Assistant with Ph.D., Assistant Professor, Associate Professor and Full Professor.

⁷ Research Associate, Senior Research Associate or Principal Research Fellow; or Assistant Professor, Associate Professor or Full Professor.

⁸ This includes the time period from the beginning of 2015 and ending with the date of the submission deadline of this Public Call. The justifiability of termination/halt/suspension in the research and scientific work which is significant for the fulfillment of these terms – e.g. temporary inability to work, leave, including maternity or paternity leave or absence from work in order to provide (special) care to a child or another person – may be taken into consideration when making the assessment and determination of the duration of this five-year period, but it has to be adequately elaborated.

⁹ In Serbian: Pravilnik o postupku, načinu vrednovanja i kvantitativnom iskazivanju naučnoistraživačkih rezultata istraživača, “Sl. glasnik RS”, br. 24/2016, 21/2017 and 38/2017, <http://www.mpn.gov.rs/wp-content/uploads/2015/09/Pravilnik-zvanja-2017-konacno.pdf>.

¹⁰ A Research Associate or an Assistant Professor meets the requirements for award of the title Senior Research Associate, and a Senior Research Associate or an Associate Professor meets the requirements for award of the title Principal Research Fellow.

five years, s/he meets the requirements from the “Compulsory (2)” group for the award of the title Principal Research Fellow.

The Principal investigator must be employed in an SRO with a monthly commitment to the Project not less than 30%.

At the time of submission of the Proposal, the Principal investigator shall enclose a Statement on the Fulfillment of Conditions defined in paragraph 1 of this Article, signed under full moral responsibility and criminal liability. If the Project is approved for financing, the Principal investigator shall have to submit evidence on the fulfillment of these conditions.

The Science Fund of the Republic of Serbia reserves the right to deny application within programs of the Science Fund to those researchers whose applications contain false data or the content of such applications is formulated in such a way to be intentionally misleading, for up to two years following such an occurrence. If it is determined that a researcher has violated the Code of Ethics, the Ethical Board formed by the National Council for Scientific and Technological Development may suggest forbidding usage of funds allocated for scientific research projects by the Science Fund of the Republic of Serbia for up to five years for that researcher.¹¹

Article 6

Within this Program, the Project can also include as a member of the Project Team:

- 1) one researcher from the Diaspora, who is employed in an accredited SRO abroad, and whose engagement is regulated pursuant to Article 113 of the Law on Science and Research;
- 2) one retired full professor or a retired Principal Research Fellow, or one professor emeritus, or one retired member of the Serbian Academy of Sciences and Arts.

While the Project Team Member stipulated by paragraph 1 of the present Article may not receive a fee for engagement on the Project, s/he is entitled to payment of costs related to travel, accommodation and stay in the Republic Serbia for the purpose of engagement in Project activities.

In exceptional cases, when the proposed research topic or activity demands it, a member of the Project Team can also be a retired full professor or a retired Principal Research Fellow, professor emeritus or a retired member of the Serbian Academy of Sciences and Arts. For each Proposal, there can be only one member of the team from this category of researchers, but s/he must meet the same requirements as the Principal investigator, stipulated by Article 5 paragraph 1 line 3 hereof. While this category of Team Members may not receive a fee for his/her engagement on the Project, s/he is entitled to payment of costs related to travel, accommodation and stay for the purpose of engagement in Project activities.

Article 7

The Project duration is up to three years (36 months).

The maximum Project budget amount is € 300,000 per Project in counter-value expressed in RSD.

In exceptional cases, when the cost of equipment requires a larger budget, the Principal investigator may require additional budget up to € 200.000 in the counter-value expressed in RSD, for purchase or upgrade of one capital piece of equipment (equipment, i.e. upgrade of the equipment in the value of more than € 50.000). This request has to be justified in the Project Proposal Budget Form. For such cases, the total budget of the Proposal can reach up to € 500.000 in the counter-value expressed in RSD, but all rules from Article 8 related to other categories of costs, excluding the capital equipment, shall apply within the Project budget.

In this Act and all documentation within this Program, the term “total Project budget” means the budget within the € 300.000 limit, in the counter-value expressed in RSD, and the term “extended Project budget” means the budget that includes the additional budget for the purchase or upgrade of the capital equipment referred to in paragraph 3 of this Article.

The first Public Call defines the total budget for financing Projects in the implementation of the Program with the provision that additional funds for Program financing are approved or redistributed under a new Public Call for the implementation of the Program.

Article 8

The following categories of Project costs are permitted for financing under the Program:

- 1) Team Members’ fees (including all relevant taxes and contributions for Team members engaged on the Project)¹², except the Team Member who is involved in accordance with Article 6 hereof;
- 2) reimbursement to the SROs employing the Project participants for administrative and other project-related expenses;

¹¹ As stipulated in Article 94 and Article 95 of the Law on Science and Research, *Official Gazette of the Republic of Serbia*, No. 49 of July 8th, 2019.

¹² The remuneration model shall be determined by the SRO, in compliance with the Law and the internal acts of the SRO.

- 3) procurement of equipment, software, consumables and other resources necessary for the Project implementation;
- 4) services of all natural persons¹³ and legal entities, as required for research and the Project implementation;
- 5) costs of publishing in journals¹⁴, as well as in open-access journals, participation in scientific conferences, publishing books and monographs;
- 6) short-term travel by the Team members as required for Project implementation;
- 7) organization of conferences and seminars and other costs of disseminating Project results;
- 8) applications for patents and protection of intellectual property generated as a result of Project activities, and associated expenses.

The highest allowed fee of a natural person engaged through services is equivalent to the amount that is defined for his/her employment contract and scaled proportionally to the percentage of his/her monthly Project engagement.

In view of the specific nature of each Proposal, the Project budget distribution per category of costs defined in paragraph 1 of this Article must reflect Project objectives and must be clearly justified in accordance with those objectives.

Certain categories of costs may be represented in the Project budget with no more than:

- costs listed in item 1), up to 70 % of the total Project budget;
- costs listed in item 2), up to 13 % of the total Project budget;
- costs listed in item 3), up to 30 % of the total Project budget;
- costs listed in item 4), up to 20 % of the total Project budget.
- costs listed in items 5), 6), 7) together up to 10 % of the total Project budget;

In an exceptional case when it is necessary to deviate from the stipulated structure of costs listed in paragraph 1 item 3) of this Article, the Project Proposal has to justify the necessity for the proposed costs and the distribution. The maximal deviation in exceeding the allowed costs in paragraph 1 item 3) of this Article is 15 % of the total Project budget (i.e., the upper limit is 45% of the total Project budget).

Reimbursement to the SRO employing the Team Members should be allocated for administrative and other Project-related expenses. Up to 10% of the total Project budget need not be justified. If the additional 3% are requested in the Project Proposal for this category¹⁵, these costs have to be justified. The budgeting of the SRO technical and auxiliary staff shall be calculated based on their current salary in the SRO, scaled to the percentage of their respective monthly engagement on Project activities. If more than one SRO participates in the Proposal, this category of costs should be proportionally allocated in accordance with the total requested budget for each SRO, unless the Principal investigator and all participating SROs make a different agreement, which shall be clarified and justified in writing in the budget.

Deviations from the defined structure of costs or stipulation of costs outside of the permitted categories referred to in paragraphs 1-6 of this Article are prohibited, and Proposals with such deviations will be excluded from the evaluation procedure.

During the implementation of the Project, within the approved total Project budget, adjustments of the budget categories up to 10% of the value of the individual budget category may be proposed periodically. Budget adjustments must be aligned with the budget restrictions for each budget category defined in this Article. Such adjustments have to be approved by the Science Fund.

Article 9

Costs ineligible for financing by the Science Fund include but are not limited to the following:

- renovation and equipping of SRO premises and any type of construction or other works;
- repair, servicing or maintenance of the SRO's existing equipment, unless the equipment is required for the Project and justified and documented in the Proposal;
- bank commission fees and differences in currency exchanges;
- payment of interest or current debt to any party, including commitments made or undertaken during consideration of the Project application, or upon the approval of the Project financing;
- costs of items or services that are already being financed by another program, entity or SRO;

¹³ Engagement of natural persons refers to individuals not employed in the SRO participating in the Project, who are essential for the implementation of Project activities. Such individuals shall be considered service providers or subcontractors, rather than Project participants.

¹⁴ Journal category must be specified in the elaboration of the Budget. Researchers are suggested to aim for international journals from the JCR list with category M21, with the exceptions for research areas that do not have journals in these categories.

¹⁵ For the engagement of the SRO's technical staff, additional administrative support, servicing and maintenance of the existing equipment which is required for the implementation of research activities.

- costs/participation in the costs of purchase, lease, sub-lease or adaptation of land, facilities and/or other real estate, including vehicles and movable assets and equipment not designated for Project related scientific and research activities;
- costs depending on sources of funding for each Public Call, which will be announced in the first Public Call.

Article 10

Procurements of goods and services related to the implementation of a Project, whose financing has been approved under the Program, are conducted in compliance with the law and the Contract on Financing the Implementation of a Science and Research Project of the Science Fund of the Republic of Serbia (hereinafter referred to as the: "Contract"), which the Science Fund shall conclude with the Team Members and the SRO, following procedures of the institution that provides sources of funding that will be defined in detail in the Contract.

The Principal investigator is obligated to provide relevant documentation related to conducted procurements stipulated in paragraph 1 of this Article to the Science Fund in compliance with the Program, the Contract, or upon the written request made by the Fund.

Article 11

The Principal investigator is obligated to manage the Project conscientiously, responsibly and in compliance with legal provisions regulating the science and research, environmental protection, protection of intellectual property, personal data protection, prevention of conflict of interest and other provisions essential for ethical and lawful implementation of Project activities.

Article 12

The Science Fund shall disburse the funds to the SRO in compliance with the approved Project budget and the signed Contract. The payments will be performed quarterly, upon the adopted Report for the previous quarter. Payment distribution shall be defined in the Contract. Equipment and consumables shall be purchased at the beginning of the Project implementation. The first payment shall be provided in advance for the first quarter, within 30 days starting from the date of the Contract signing. The last payment, in the amount of 5% of the total Project budget, shall be paid within 30 days after the Science Fund confirms acceptance of the Final Report.

The Principal investigator shall provide the Science Fund with a quarterly administrative and financial report, which constitutes a condition for disbursement of funds for the following quarter. The Principal investigator shall provide the Science Fund with an annual narrative and financial Project Progress Report by the end of each project year, and the Project Final Report by the end of the project implementation.

The Principal investigator must provide the relevant information and documents for the external audit of the Project if requested by the Science Fund. The Principal investigator and the SRO shall ensure that funds are utilized in compliance with the law and contracted conditions and obligations. The SRO shall disburse funds to third parties in accordance with the implementation of Project activities.

All disbursements shall be made in dinars (RSD) in accordance with the median exchange rate of the National Bank of Serbia as at the date of payment, to a separate current-account of the SRO (or a separate sub-account) earmarked solely for purposes of the Project within this Program.

Article 13

The Science Fund shall regularly supervise and monitor Project implementation through a review of the submitted quarterly and annual reports stipulated in Article 12, paragraph 2 hereof, monitoring visits to the Project Team Members should the Science Fund find such visits necessary, and direct monitoring of individual Project activities, as well as through a review of the Final Report on the Project results. Should it be determined that the Project funds have been used for wrongful purposes, the Fund reserves the right to stop the further implementation and financing of the Project, to demand the recovery of the money that has already been paid and to undertake other activities that the Science Fund deems appropriate.

Project monitoring is regulated by relevant acts of the Science Fund and the Law.

The Science Fund shall periodically make a review of the usage of funds allocated to a Project during the Project implementation, in accordance with internal acts of the Science Fund.

Article 14

The Principal investigator has to be engaged on the Project during the entire duration of the Project. Project Team Members may be engaged for the entire duration of the Project or only during certain time intervals, depending on the Project needs and in accordance with the proposed budget.

If over the course of the Project implementation the Principal investigator should need to replace a Team Member or a percentage of his/her engagement on the Project, the Principal investigator shall provide the Science Fund with a justified proposal for such a change, which must be consented to by the Science Fund in

writing prior to such change. The Team Member coming to the position of the Team Member who has to be replaced has to fulfill all the conditions stipulated by Article 4 hereof.

In accordance with the initiated, explained and justified changes specified in paragraph 2 of this Article, for which the Science Fund has given its consent, the signed Contract and addenda constituting its integral part shall be amended or supplemented accordingly.

Article 15

In compliance with the legal provisions governing science and research activities, the rights to all new intellectual property and know-how that may be generated during the course of the Project belong to the SRO. If Team Members are employed by different SROs, they shall sign a separate statement, confirming their agreement to their mutual relationships and rights to the intellectual property generated during the Project implementation.

Commercialization of results shall be achieved pursuant to the law and the Rulebook of the SRO. The SRO is obligated to guarantee the rights to intellectual property and know-how in contracts concluded with any third party.

Project results are subject to open science principles, in accordance with the Open Science Platform of the Ministry responsible for science and research activities (hereinafter referred to as the: "Ministry").

Article 16

For the purposes of the Program monitoring and evaluation, the Science Fund shall perform independent analysis of beneficiaries once a year and at the end of the Program per Public Call, based on clearly defined milestones and results. In order to accomplish this goal, the beneficiaries shall provide the Science Fund with all the necessary information and documentation as well access to relevant sites and facilities.

The Science Fund submits a relevant report to the Ministry and other relevant stakeholders on the results of the monitoring and evaluation specified in paragraph 1 of this Article.

II. PUBLIC CALL

Article 17

The first Public Call for applications of science and research projects in subprograms within the scope of the Program IDEAS (hereinafter referred to as the: "Public Call") comprises the following:

- full title of the Program IDEAS;
- objectives of the Program and the subprograms;
- duration of Projects;
- conditions to be fulfilled by the Principal investigator and Team Members;
- total budget available for implementation of the Program under the Public Call;
- the maximum budget of individual Projects;
- permitted categories of costs to be financed by the Science Fund;
- method of submission of Proposals;
- deadline for the submission of Proposals;
- list of required documentation to be submitted with a duly completed Proposal application;
- the manner and criteria for evaluation of Proposals;
- expected duration of the process of evaluation of Proposals;
- reporting requirements;
- other information relevant to Program implementation.

The Public Call shall be published on the website of the Science Fund of the Republic of Serbia (www.fondznanauku.gov.rs).

III. APPLICATION TO THE PUBLIC CALL

Article 18

Application to the Public Call is submitted exclusively in electronic form, through the online portal, along with the documentation stipulated in the Public Call and in accordance with the instructions for implementation of the Public Call (hereinafter referred to as the: "Instructions") published on the website of the Science Fund.

The Proposal must be complete and include all the required annexes, and it must be prepared in accordance with the Instructions. Otherwise, the Proposal shall be excluded from further evaluation.

The Proposal is submitted by the prospective Principal investigator.

Article 19

The Principal investigator may apply with a Proposal for only one Project within the scope of one Public Call. The Principal investigator who applies with a Proposal for one Project may not be included as a Team Member in other Proposals within the scope of the same Public Call.

A person who is not engaged as the Principal investigator of a Project submitted to the Public Call may be listed as a Team Member in only one Project within the scope of the same Public Call.

A single SRO may apply with an unlimited number of Proposals in a Public Call.

Article 20

The required elements of a Proposal are as follows:

- Specification of the subprogram¹⁶ within the scope of the Public Call for which the Project application is submitted (in English);
- Project title, acronym, field of science (primary, secondary and tertiary), abstract and keywords (in English);
- Information on the Principal investigator, Team Members and SROs that participate in the Project (in English);
- Project Description A and B in accordance with the template provided in the documentation;
- Project Budget (in English, completed in accordance with the Instructions and the template provided in the documentation);
- Gantt chart, in English, completed in accordance with the Instructions and the template provided in the documentation;
- Ethics Approval (if applicable to the Project);
- Project presentation (in English, up to 10 slides);
- Annexes (declarations of the SROs, joint statement of the Project Team and evidence of fulfillment of Program conditions for the Principal investigator and the Team Members, in Serbian or in English, prepared in accordance with the Instructions and the template provided in the documentation and other documents).

IV. PROCEDURE FOR THE EVALUATION OF THE SUBMITTED PROPOSALS

Article 21

Evaluation of each Proposal shall be conducted within the subprogram for which it is submitted.

The received Proposals, including the documentation specified in Articles 18 and 20 hereof, are examined and assessed in a procedure consisting of administrative examination and two evaluation stages.

In stage one of the evaluation, independent peer reviewers engaged by the Science Fund (hereinafter referred to as the: "Reviewer") evaluate the Project Description.

In stage two of the evaluation, the preliminary shortlist of Proposals is assembled in accordance with scores awarded to these Proposals by Reviewers.

The Program Board for Project Evaluation (hereinafter referred to as the: "Program Board") evaluates the Proposals from this list and assembles the final shortlist of the Proposals.

The evaluation of the Proposals is performed in keeping with the procedure defined in the relevant acts of the Science Fund and according to the criteria defined in the Program.

Article 22

As a rule, the Reviewers are international experts, and exceptionally local experts with internationally recognized professional careers. The Reviewers are selected by the Science Fund according to the principle of having individual expertise that corresponds to the scientific field of the proposed Project, mainly based on the keywords stated in the Proposal. Selection of Reviewers is done through the procedure regulated by the relevant acts of the Science Fund.

The Program Board consists of four expert panels (hereinafter referred to as the: "Expert Panel"). Each Expert Panel is responsible for one subprogram from Article 3 hereof: for natural sciences; technical and technological sciences; (bio)medical sciences; and social sciences and humanities, respectively, and it shall be composed of three to five members. The Program Board members are international experts in the natural sciences, technical and technological sciences, (bio)medical sciences, and social sciences and humanities, respectively, and exceptionally local experts with internationally recognized professional careers. Selection of the Program Board members is done through the procedure regulated by the relevant acts of the Science Fund.

¹⁶ For a multidisciplinary Program Proposal, the Project Manager shall select a subprogram that corresponds to the dominant research area of the Proposal.

Article 23

All received Proposals shall undergo the administrative examination stipulated by Article 21, paragraph 2 hereof, which includes a review of the application documentation submitted to the first Public Call in order to:

- establish the timeliness of the submitted Proposal against the deadline stipulated in the announced Public Call;
- establish that the Proposal is administratively accurate and complete, including all annexes, confirmations and signatures;
- confirm that the Proposal fulfils the general conditions defined in the Public Call within the Program, including formal fulfillment of criteria for the Principal investigator, Team Members and the SROs and prescribed relations and proportions in the budget.

The administrative examination referred to in paragraph 1 of this Article is performed by persons employed by the Science Fund.

A Proposal that passes the administrative examination shall qualify for stage one of the evaluation procedure.

The Science Fund may, at its discretion, contact applicants for clarifications or additional information as deemed necessary for completing the administrative evaluation. If a Proposal fails the administrative examination, the Science Fund shall exclude it from further evaluation and notify the applicant in the Public Call of the reasons for rejection of the Proposal in the administrative part of the evaluation procedure.

Article 24

During the evaluation procedure, Proposals are scored both numerically and descriptively, in accordance with relevant templates available in the Program documentation on the website of the Science Fund.

The evaluation criteria are:

- **Excellence** – quality, relevance and contemporary significance of the proposed topic, scientific merit, innovation, rationality of objectives, importance of the research, applicability of the results and future prospects of the proposed research; maximum 40 points in stage one of the evaluation and maximum 10 points in stage two of the evaluation.
- **Impact** – contribution to capacities for scientific research in the Republic of Serbia and integration of new knowledge, contribution to strengthening the competitive advantages of the economy and international collaboration, relevance and significance of the scientific research for the economy, the society, quality of life and the environment, efficacy of the proposed measures of the Project promotion and visibility, and application of the Project results; maximum 30 points in stage one of the evaluation and maximum 10 points in stage two of evaluation.
- **Implementation** – assessment of competence of the Principal investigator and other members of the Team, rationality of the implementation plan, possible risks and mitigation measures, budget rationality and balance, working conditions provided by the SRO; maximum 30 points in stage one of the evaluation and maximum 10 points in stage two of evaluation.

In stage two of the evaluation, the presentation of the Proposal shall also be scored with maximum 5 points.

In order to pass stage one of the evaluation, each Proposal must receive at least 60% of the maximal number of points for each criterion and at least 70% of the maximal total number of points (Table 1). In order to pass stage two of the evaluation, each Proposal must receive at least 70% of the maximal total number of points (Table 1).

The total score awarded in stage one of the evaluation is multiplied by 0.65 and added up to the total score awarded in stage two of the evaluation to obtain the final score.

Table 1 – Criteria for the evaluation of Projects; the maximum (and minimum) number of points.

Criterion	1 st Stage (p)	2 nd Stage (p)
Excellence	40 (min. 24)	10
Impact	30 (min. 18)	10
Implementation	30 (min. 18)	10
Presentation	0	5
Total	100 (min. 70)	35 (min. 24.5)

Article 25

In stage one of the evaluation, each Project proposal is evaluated, as a rule, by three Reviewers.

A Reviewer scores each question with a numerical value (awarding between 0 and 5 points) and descriptively. The Reviewer also provides an explicit recommendation confirming or withholding his/hers

support for the Proposal. The maximal score that can be awarded by a Reviewer is 100 points, in line with the criteria specified in Article 24 hereof.

Upon completion of the reviews, a commission of the Science Fund summarizes the reviews, and calculates the average scores for each criterion and the total average score, as the arithmetic mean of the relevant scores awarded by the Reviewers. In case that the highest and the lowest total score awarded by the reviewers differ for more than 15% of the maximum number of the awarded scores, the Commission of the Science Fund notes the discord and coordinates the reviewers to reach consensus or justify the difference of opinions. The Commission of the Science Fund may request one additional independent review of the Proposal.

In order to pass the evaluation by the Reviewers, the average awarded numbers of points must be greater than the corresponding minimal numbers from Table 1 in Article 24 hereof.

Upon completion of stage one of the evaluation, each Principal investigator shall receive a notification on the outcome.

Article 26

Prior to stage two of the evaluation, a preliminary shortlist is assembled based on the Proposals ranking after the stage one of the evaluation, as defined in Article 25 hereof, taking into account only those Proposals that have satisfied the criteria laid down in Article 24 hereof and whose aggregated extended Project budgets do not exceed the double budget of the Program stipulated in the Public Call.

Based on the preliminary shortlist, four sublists shall be created which include all Proposals from the preliminary shortlist and are classified according to the research area of the four subprograms defined in Article 3 hereof.

Proposals from the Sublists referred to in paragraph 2 hereof are evaluated by the members of the corresponding Expert Panel of the Program Board. All Proposals that are on the shortlist shall be presented to the corresponding Expert Panel of the Program Board.

Each member of the Expert Panel scores the presentation with a maximum of 5 points and evaluates excellence, impact and implementation in accordance with criteria laid down in Article 24 hereof by awarding each a maximum of 10 points. Each member also provides an explicit recommendation confirming or withholding the support for the Proposal. The expert panel calculates the average scores for each criterion and the total average score, as the arithmetic mean of the respective scores awarded by the Expert Panel Members.

The maximum score that can be awarded by the Expert Panel is 35 points, in line with the criteria specified in Article 24 hereof. In order to pass stage two of the evaluation, the total average score must be at least 24.5 points. The Expert Panel also provides an explicit recommendation confirming or withholding the support for the Proposal.

The total average score from stage one is scaled down to 65% and added to the total average score awarded by the Expert Panel. The maximal total score for both evaluation stages is 100 points.

The Expert Panel may request from the Principal investigator that the proposed Project budget be rebalanced in its entirety or in individual items specified in Article 8 hereof. The Expert Panel may also request from the Principal investigator that the milestones proposed in the Proposal be adjusted and/or clarified.

Considering only the Proposals that have passed the evaluation specified in paragraph 5 of this Article, based on the total average scores awarded to the Proposals in both evaluation steps, for each subprogram, the Expert Panel of each subprogram assembles a new ranking in each Sublist. Based on the new ranking, each Expert Panel assembles its final shortlist that includes the top-ranked Proposals whose aggregated extended Project budgets are within one half of the amount aggregated by all Proposals from the whole corresponding Sublist referred to in paragraph 2 of this Article.

If within one subprogram there are not enough Proposals that are selected for stage two of the evaluation in order to fulfill cumulatively the budget referred to in paragraph 8 of this Article, the budget may be distributed to other subprograms. The remaining available budget will be allocated to the top-ranked Proposals from other subprograms. If two or more Proposals share the same score, the Program Board shall reach consensus and propose the Project Proposal that is most aligned with the Program goals. The total required budget proposed by the Expert Panels for all Projects accepted for financing may not exceed the total budget of the Program defined in the Public Call.

Article 27

The Program Board delivers to the Scientific Council of the Science Fund shortlists for four subprograms, in accordance with Article 26 paragraph 8 of this Article.

The Scientific Council delivers its opinion to the Managing Board of the Science Fund along with four final shortlists specified in paragraph 1 of this Article.

Article 28

Based on the shortlists specified in Article 27 hereof, the Managing Board of the Science Fund shall make a decision on adoption of the final shortlists of Projects in each subprogram that are approved for

financing by the Science Fund under the first Public Call in this Program and on the amount of funds that are being allocated to each Project approved for financing.

Article 29

Once the Managing Board of the Science Fund has made its decision specified in Article 28 hereof, the final lists of Proposals approved for financing in each of four subprograms of this Program shall be posted on the website of the Science Fund, and the Principal investigator shall receive notification on the outcome of stage two of the evaluation and the Decision of the Managing Board.

Article 30

Project applicants within the Program have the right to file a fact-based objection to the outcome:

a) the administrative examination stipulated by Article 23 hereof (invoking evident omissions, oversights or errors made by the Science Fund);

b) the evaluation procedure in step two stipulated by Article 26 hereof (invoking evident omissions, oversights or errors made by the Program Board).

The appeal shall be submitted in writing, with a 500-word limit, within 8 calendar days upon the date of receiving the notification of the Science Fund on the outcome of the administrative evaluation/stage two evaluation.

The content of the appeal must be limited to explanation of the data already contained in the Proposal and it can in no way suggest or imply a modification of the content of the proposed Project in any of its segments.

The Science Fund shall provide an official reply to the objection within 30 calendar days upon the date of its timely receipt.

Article 31

For Proposals that have been approved for financing in accordance with the shortlists specified in Article 28 hereof, contracts will be signed with the Science Fund.

V. EVALUATION OF PROJECTS DURING THE COURSE OF IMPLEMENTATION

Article 32

The achieved Project results shall be monitored and evaluated during the course of the Project implementation pursuant to Article 12, paragraph 2 and Article 13 paragraph 1 hereof. As needed, the implementation and purpose-oriented utilization of funds in line with the approved Project budget may also be subject to ad-hoc evaluation at the behest of the Science Fund, or upon a justified request of the SRO or the Principal investigator.

For the purposes of evaluation, the Principal investigator communicates the Project results in a corresponding report.

Annual, ad-hoc and final project evaluations are performed by at least one person with international experience in the field of the Project. The evaluation may include an audit pursuant to Article 13 hereof.

The Project evaluation entails a comparison between the proposed and the achieved objectives of the research, the accomplished scientific results, the assessment of utilization of funds and other relevant indicators. If during the course of the evaluation it is established that the Project implementation has not been fully compliant with the Proposal, the Science Fund shall notify the Program Board for Program Preparation, Monitoring and Evaluation, which in turn may propose to the Managing Board of the Science Fund to decrease the contracted budget or to suspend Project financing altogether, which may also include initiation of a procedure for reimbursement of funds spent wrongfully or illicitly or any further action as appropriate. The final decision on decrease of the Project budget, suspension of financing and/or initiation of the procedure for reimbursement of the received funds shall be made by the Managing Board of the Science Fund, while the execution of such a decision is overseen by the Director of the Science Fund, pursuant to Article 15, paragraph 1, item 5) of the Law.

VI. PROMOTION AND VISIBILITY OF PROJECT RESULTS

Article 33

The Principal investigator is obligated to ensure promotion of the Project and visibility of the Project results through participation in conferences, scientific publications, organization of forums and seminars,

promotion in mainstream and social media, organization of visits to the Project Team and the laboratory, and in other ways. It is suggested to have papers published in leading scientific journals, including those applying the Open Science principle, as well as at leading international conferences.

In all papers that are published in journals and presented at conferences, the Principal investigator and the Project Team Members are obligated to state that the results have been achieved on the Project financed by the Science Fund of the Republic of Serbia, as defined in the Contract.

The Principal investigator is obligated to enable access to Project results to interested parties at any time over the duration of the Project, and for at least one year following the Project completion.

Additional visibility and communications rules will be specified in the Contract.

It is recommended that the primary data collected during the Project implementation be systematically consolidated, structured and formatted electronically, and to be made freely accessible (open data).

VII. FINAL PROVISIONS

Article 34

This Act shall enter into force on the eighth day following its publication on the webpage of the Science Fund of the Republic of Serbia.

Science Fund of the Republic of Serbia
MANAGING BOARD

Chairperson

This Act is published on the webpage of the Science Fund of the Republic of Serbia upon receipt of the Decision of the Government of the Republic of Serbia 05 No. 451-2121/2020 of March 5th, 2020 (*Official Gazette of the Republic of Serbia*, No. 21/20) on issuance of consent to the IDEAS Program.